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ABSTRACT

This volume contains an address by Richard John Neuhaus entitled "Let the Church Be the Church" in which it is asserted that the crisis in Christian social ethics today is a crisis of faith which calls for spiritual, theological, and ethical renewal. The address is a retrospective look at the Vietnam-era debate between Neuhaus and Paul Ramsey, professor emeritus of religion at Princeton University. Included are responses to the address from Paul Ramsey; a Methodist Bishop (Earl G. Hunt, Jr.); and an African Methodist Episcopal Bishop (Philip R. Cousin); and the final word from Neuhaus, the main speaker. (KWL)

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November 1983

Speaking to the World

Four Protestant Perspectives

Richard John Neuhaus

Responses by Earl G. Hunt, Jr., Paul Ramsey, and Philip Cousin

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This is one of a series of essays and reprints published by the Ethics and Public Policy Center to make available to a wider audience thoughtful perspectives on issues of domestic and foreign policy. Like original Center studies, the essays are written by authors who recognize the validity of fundamental Western values and attempt to combine moral reasoning with empirical analysis. The authors alone are responsible for the views expressed.

* * * * *

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Foreword

In 1967 Professor Paul Ramsey wrote a book entitled *Who Speaks for the Church?* in which he sharply rebuked the Protestant ecumenical establishment for the substance of many of its political pronouncements, the process by which they were produced, and the assumptions that underlay them. His indictment was provoked by the World Council of Churches' 1966 Geneva Conference on Church and Society, a two-week gathering at which delegates from eighty countries and 164 churches drew up and adopted "conclusions" on a bewildering array of complex issues, all without the benefit of advance position papers.

The question Dr. Ramsey posed in his title—Who speaks for the church?—is as pertinent today as it was then, and it was the theme of the Ethics and Public Policy Center's third annual conference, held in Washington in April 1983. Here we present an edited version of one session of that conference. An address by Lutheran theologian Richard John Neuhaus is followed by responses from Methodist bishop Earl G. Hunt, Jr., African Methodist Episcopal bishop Philip R. Cousin, and Dr. Ramsey. The main speaker then returns for the final word.

The Geneva conference in 1966 and Ramsey's critique concided with a sharpening of the moral debate over U.S. involvement in Indochina. The present dialogue includes a retrospective look at the Vietnam-era debate between Pastor Neuhaus and Dr. Ramsey, each of whom has in his own way been prophetic. This work will be of particular interest to religious leaders who struggle to apply the insights of their faith in confronting public issues in a complex and dangerous world. Concerned laymen too can profit from this provocative interchange.

Richard John Neuhaus, a well-known writer and lecturer, is the associate editor of *Lutheran Forum*. Earl G. Hunt, Jr., is resident

bishop of the Florida Area of the United Methodist Church and a member of the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches. Paul Ramsey is professor emeritus of religion at Princeton University. Philip R. Cousin is presiding bishop of the Eighth District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (Birmingham, Alabama) and also serves on the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches.

Another conference session is available in this same format under the title *Who Speaks for American Judaism?* Responding to the main address by Rabbi Seymour N. Siegel, a theology professor who now is executive director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, are Marshall J. Breger, a law professor; Joshua O. Haberman, a leading Reform rabbi; and David Saperstein, an attorney and religious activist.

As in all Center publications, the views expressed here are those of the authors. They are presented with the hope that they will stimulate reflective thought and responsible action among citizens who believe in relating the Judeo-Christian heritage to contemporary problems.

ERNEST W. LEFEVER, *President*
Ethics and Public Policy Center

Washington, D.C.
September 20, 1983

'Let the Church Be the Church!'

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

THE 1967 BOOK BY Paul Ramsey entitled *Who Speaks for the Church?* was a sharp and prescient address to many of the issues that are now agitating Christians about the public work and witness of the churches. My purpose is to review his critique and suggestions, to evaluate their relevance then and now, and to draw some conclusions about what might be done to achieve a greater measure of clarity about the distinctive role of the church in the public arena.

A personal word may be in order. I first came to know Paul Ramsey around the time he published the book in question. We took opposing sides in the debate over U.S. policy in Indochina, under the auspices of the Council on Religion and International Affairs. As a founder of Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam, I was suspect in the anti-war movement because of my insistence that, while disagreeing with Ramsey on the particulars of policy, we must heed his cautions against surrounding our prudential judgments with the rhetoric of "thus saith the Lord."

While my participation in the anti-war movement was haunted and tempered by the voice of Paul Ramsey, the questions he raised then go far beyond the debate over Vietnam. Perhaps only now, to the extent that we are extricated from the debate over Vietnam (and admittedly that extrication is not yet completed), can the full measure of his contribution be taken.

Ramsey wrote his "little essay" in response to his experience at the World Council of Churches' 1966 Geneva Conference on

Church and Society. There, within a few days, more than three hundred people listened to addresses and broke up into sections and subsections to write reports that, taken together, came up with answers to a hundred or more questions of global import. Ramsey was appalled by the procedure and even more appalled by the principles, or lack thereof, that informed the procedure. He saw the event not merely as the miscarriage of one conference but as an indication of a syndrome that was rapidly undermining the integrity and credibility of the ecumenical movement.

The conference was orchestrated, Ramsey wrote, by the "social action curia" and reflected a "Church and Society syndrome." (He insisted that he did not use the term "curia" pejoratively, but it must be observed that nobody has used that term favorably for a long time.) By "syndrome," he wrote, "I mean the passion for numerous particular pronouncements on policy questions to the consequent neglect of basic decision- and action-oriented principles of ethical and political analysis."

Ramsey saw then the contradictions that still obtain in such ecumenical meetings: the participants fancy themselves the voice of the church speaking to the world, especially to political decision-makers, and at the same time they want to posture as a prophetic voice speaking to the churches. They simultaneously presume to speak for the church while trying to persuade the church to accept their viewpoint. To use Troeltsch's well-known terms, they want at the same time to be both church and sect. In the tradition of the great cultural churches, they would speak truth to the power of which they are part. In the great sectarian tradition, they would speak a word of divine judgment against principalities and powers from which they have come out and separated themselves. You cannot, insisted Ramsey, have it both ways.

But this contradiction was not the chief concern exercising Paul Ramsey. In whatever mode the ecumenical movement speaks—whether as church or sect, whether as church to the world or as prophetic voice to the churches—the main problem, he thought, is that it is speaking with the wrong purpose. It is speaking primarily to influence public policy specifics, rather than as a teacher determined to elevate the thought and discourse by which such policies are formed. "Radical steps need to be taken in ecumenical ethics if

ever we are to correct the pretense that we are makers of political policy and get on with our proper task of nourishing, judging, and repairing the moral and political *ethos* of our time."

Although Ramsey did not put it this way, his argument is sympathetic to the proposition that politics is in large part a function of culture, and at the heart of culture is religion and the ethical reasoning that is grounded in religious belief. When Christian leaders believe that policy formation is "the big time," and the formation of culture is therefore a lesser task, it says more about their religion than about their politics. For churches to be more concerned about the pros and cons of the MX missile than about underscoring the dignity of the human person is not a step upwards toward relevance but a step downwards toward trivialization. Those who think that the dignity of the human person can be taken for granted, and that it is more important to "do something" about the MX missile, have little understanding of the cultural corrosion that has produced this era of moral decadence.

Directions, Not Directives

Quite apart from the question of which tasks are more important, however, Ramsey contends that the church is called to do well the *distinctive* task that belongs to it because it is the church. "Our quest should be to find out whether there is anything especially Christian and especially important that churchmen *as such* may have to say in the public forum concerning the direction of public policy—not directives for it." Acknowledging that the line between "directions" and "directives" is not always clear, he urges that we should at least be clear about our distinctive intention. Our intention is not so much to tell policy-makers what they should do as to enlighten them as to what they must take into account in *deciding* what to do.

Ramsey is aware that this may sound like an argument for speaking pious generalities and avoiding the controversies of policy specifics. If his argument is taken seriously, however, it becomes clear that "pious generality" is a dismissive phrase only because the pious have not thought very carefully about their generalities. Ramsey wants to insist upon the admittedly difficult distinction between principled reflection and policy specifics. The

church is not fulfilling its task if it is content either with the moral truisms appropriate to Mount Olympus or with the mobilization of influence appropriate to clubhouse politics. The distinctive task of the church is to be found in the shifting ground between the pseudo-transcendence of aloofness and the myopic immanence of political partisanship.

"Must those who undertake to speak for the church, or in the name of Christian truth, choose between abstract irrelevancies and policy-making exercises?" Ramsey asks. His answer is clearly negative. In an especially insightful section on "the abstractness of concrete advice," Ramsey notes that what are offered as policy-making exercises often result in vacuous generalizations. In a particular circumstance, the church may think it is being very specific and practical in calling upon warring parties to declare a cease-fire and negotiate their differences. If one party to the conflict has tried just that, however, and the other party has made clear its determination to intensify the fighting, then the advice is utterly without practical import. It sounds very specific and policy-oriented but in fact translates into nothing more than the bland abstraction, "Let there be no war."

As he wrote about "the abstractness of concrete advice," Ramsey might also have written on "the concreteness of abstract advice." In the rhetoric of specific conflicts, the most abstract generalities translate into the most concrete policy recommendations. During the Vietnam years, "No more war!" was translated to mean U.S. withdrawal from Indochina. "America should be on the side of the poor and oppressed" is translated to mean no more aid to El Salvador. "Taking risks for peace" means risking war by unilateral disarmament. In short, the choice is not between the abstract and the concrete, for our abstractions become concrete advice and, as Ramsey illustrates, our concrete advice becomes an abstraction.

In the spirit of Ramsey, I would suggest that an alternative begins with an understanding of the connection between the transcendent and the immanent. We must work within and accept responsibility for a specific historical moment that is—as are all historical moments short of the Kingdom of God—deeply unsatisfactory. But the context that is this historical moment has itself a

context—a context of time-transcending, even eternal, truth and promise. Without the "context of the context," there is no transcendence. Then the World Council of Churches was right to adopt the slogan, "The world sets the agenda for the church." For then there is no other agenda, there is no other game in town. Then there is nothing else to be "relevant to" but the specific policy decisions and power wieldings of this historical moment. This "loss of transcendence" is the core problem underscored by the Hartford Appeal for Theological Affirmation, issued by an independent ecumenical meeting in 1975.

The drafters of the Hartford Appeal put together a group of essays—*Against the World for the World*—that should be read alongside Ramsey's *Who Speaks for the Church?* Such a comparison reveals many similarities, but it also points up a significant difference. Ramsey's argument would have been stronger, I believe, had he attended in this book to the theological debilitation that results in the miscarriage of social ethics. For example, he rightly excoriates religious leadership for prescribing political policy decisions when they themselves do not accept responsibility for the consequences of such decisions. It is a form of cheap prophecy. "Political rulership," he writes, "makes life-giving, or at least actuality-giving, deeds out of words." "The religious communities have a less awe-ful responsibility," he suggests. But I would urge that Christians, who understand the awe-fullness, the ultimacy, of the Word, should not accept this distinction between words and actuality. My suspicion is that Paul Ramsey would agree with me on this. His unfortunate choice of language on this point in *Who Speaks for the Church?*, however, may have given aid and comfort to the opponents of transcendence.

A Self-Denying Ordinance

Ramsey repeatedly calls upon Christians who are dealing with public policy to impose upon themselves "a self-denying ordinance." By this he means that "no more [is] said in addressing the urgent political problems of the present day than can clearly be said on the basis of Christian truth and insights." The call for a self-denying ordinance is exceedingly important, but it will not be heeded if it is perceived as a call for the church to do less rather

than more. The axiom "less is more" may not apply here. For the church to speak *less* specifically, or *less* promiscuously, or with *less* certitude, on policy questions does not necessarily mean that it will thereby be speaking *more* of that truth which is distinctively appropriate to the church. Without a vigorous reappropriation of that most appropriate truth, the call of Ramsey and others to speak with self-denying carefulness will be seen as a diminution of the church's role in the modern world.

I take that most appropriate and imperative truth of the church to be, quite simply and complexly, the gospel. It is the assertion of the story—centered in the life, death, resurrection, and promised return of Christ—by which all of reality is to be rightly understood and, one day, rightly ordered.

This gospel challenges the notion that the most "awe-ful" responsibility is exercised by those who wield and influence political power. Indeed, this gospel defies the imperiousness of the political in our time. It denies the illusion that the most important events appear in the pages of the *New York Times* or that the evening news can begin to convey, as Walter Cronkite used to say, "the way it is" any day of the week. Those who believe that God worked his eternal purposes through an obstreperous tribe of Semites and revealed himself most fully in a derelict preacher crucified outside Jerusalem one Friday afternoon two thousand years ago can and must take seriously, but cannot and must not take too seriously, what the *New York Times* declares to be the world-shaping and world-shaking events of our day. Those who believe that in baptism they have already died with Christ, and that "doing this in remembrance of him" engages the cosmos in the triumph of its Lord—those who believe these things cannot be intimidated by the threats nor seduced by the promises of politics.

God works along the fault-lines of history, in the shadowed interstices of the conflict between good and evil. It is more than possible that in the sight of God—which is to say, in truth—there is no more important thing happening this day than is happening to an adolescent in Tanzania who is choosing the good, or to a prisoner in the Soviet *gulag* who knows a liberation beyond his captors' imagining or control, or in a nurse's act of love toward a dying woman in some cancer ward of this city.

What I am saying is that the crisis in Christian social ethics today is, far more than anything else, a crisis of faith. We must indeed find better, more careful, more credible ways to articulate religiously grounded truth in the political realm, but our most important contribution as believers is to relativize the realm of the political. Our engagement in the provisional politics of the present must be informed by our commitment to the radically "new politics" of the promised Kingdom. A "self-denying ordinance" can be accepted only by a church that knows that the politics of the present is not the only game or the most important game in town. Today's dispute over the church's role in politics is, in large part, a quarrel over portions of the mess of pottage for which the church has sold its birthright. Liberals, conservatives, and those who travel under other banners are scrambling to capture for their purposes a larger part of the residual resources of a faith that was brought into being by transcendent hope.

It may seem that I have wandered rather tendentiously, even homiletically, from our subject. But I do believe that a reconstruction of Christian social ethics depends upon a reconstruction of Christian faith. We are rightly concerned for the integrity of the political community; but if we, as church, are to make any contribution to the political community, we must first be concerned for the integrity of the community of faith. And that means that we must be concerned for the truth by which that community lives. It is in this shared conviction that I so powerfully sympathize with the work of Stanley Hauerwas, whom I consider one of the most seminal thinkers in Christian ethics today. Hauerwas has, in my view, leaned too far toward the "sect" side of the church/sect distinction and has thus too easily resolved some of the problems in which I find myself embroiled. But he is surely right in saying that the church must be emphatically and distinctively the church, or else it is not really very interesting who presumes to speak for it.

Return to Oxford

In a footnote of the book under examination, Paul Ramsey admits: "I am suggesting, in effect, that ecumenical ethics needs to return to Oxford and begin again." He is speaking, of course, of the ecumenical movement's Oxford Conference of 1937. There Chris-

tian leaders deliberated under the threatening shadow of the Third Reich. "German Christians," those who hailed Hitler, believed that the world sets the agenda for the church. No transcendent judgment was to be allowed. Theirs was a God entirely immanent in history, and there, at the crest of the divine insurgency in time, was Der Führer. Against this idolatry, Oxford declared, "Let the church be the church!" It is a declaration desperately needed today.

The alternative to this renewal of faith, this theological reconstruction, is a continued and pitiable division of Christians along political lines. When we stop believing the faith we start figuring out how to use it. When we stop saying our prayers, we are reduced to sniffing around for other powers to change the world. Or, if we do say prayers, they are mainly against our political opponents. When we stop believing in the "magic" of Word and Sacraments, we succumb to believing in the magic of political transformations. When we no longer have the courage to challenge secularism, we learn to play by secularism's rules.

One such rule is that all of politics be reduced to material, mainly economic, forces. Another is the maintenance of the naked public square, a public arena stripped of references to the transcendent. And so we check our embarrassingly specific Christian beliefs in the cloak room before entering the public arena. When we are by our religious selves, in our solemn assemblies, we may append a Bible passage or two to our pronouncements; but when those pronouncements are submitted in the public arena they carry no suspicious taint of their religious origins. They have been sanitized. With respect to what they *really* say, the magistrate in the public arena would not know whether they came from the United Methodist Church or from the John F. Kennedy Democratic Club, from the Thomas Road Baptist Church or from the Heritage Foundation.

Paul Ramsey would remind us that a Christian statement on public affairs is not significantly Christian just because it is made by Christians. There is, in sociological jargon, an "elective affinity" among Christians who address public affairs. As often as not, the affinity is based more on politics than on Christianity. In truth,

one's Christianity comes to be defined by one's politics. Among the "social action curia" of the National Council of Churches, actual Christian fellowship is often based more on one's attitude toward Ronald Reagan than on one's faith in Jesus Christ. Similarly, among other Christian activists, it is more important that a person be solid in his support of the pro-family agenda than that he not be sleeping around. And we have arrived at the sorry state where innumerable Americans choose their church by their choice of politics.

Politics by Resolution

This makes a mockery of the notion that the church should inform the political decision-making of its members. It also makes ludicrous the notion that the church has anything of significance to say to the public order. To that, the obvious response is, "Which church?" The secular custodians of the naked public square take great and justified comfort: the threat of the church's witness has been replaced by the impotent, if irritating, cacophony of religious caucuses trying to outshout one another. The resulting noise is called pluralism.

In 1967 Paul Ramsey saw what might happen, what now is happening. He saw that, without radical changes, "the result will be that there will be more and more specific recommendations and less and less of Christian substance informing our ecumenical councils and remaining in our culture." The prevailing pattern of "politics by resolution" results in a promiscuity of pronouncement by which we fault the consciences of others while easing our own. This is more pathetic than prophetic. The language notwithstanding, there is little about it that is radical. It is a self-serving syndrome, reinforcing illusions of self-importance. It is a bid to play with the big boys in "the real world" of political power, and, if they will not let us play with them, we will stand on the sidelines and jeer, and call ourselves prophets.

The "social action curia" has little to say about discipleship, to which all Christians are called, but much to say about prophecy. Prophecy is a notoriously special vocation to which God calls very few. The Bible is very hard on false prophets. The only prophet to

be trusted is the reluctant prophet. The true prophets were pursued by Yahweh until finally, worn down by the chase, they accepted the task to which he appointed them.

Prophecy by Committee

Today what is called prophecy has been routinized into a career pattern of ecclesiastical advancement. We even have committees and commissions for prophetic utterance, "inclusively" appointed by quota systems. They operate by the self-righteous assurance that, if what they say and do is controversial, it is controversial not because they may be wrong but only because they are being prophetic. While using radical language, they respond to criticism by resorting to the most conservative of justifications, namely, that they are authorized to speak by the religious establishment, whereas their critics are self-appointed mavericks. The church's social witness would be greatly enhanced were we to impose a ten-year moratorium on the use of the word *prophetic* in connection with institutional words and deeds. The meaning of prophecy is debased by tenured prophets and prophecy-by-committee. Indeed, if the Bible is right about prophecy as a sacred vocation, present practice is more than debasing—it is blasphemous.

Blasphemous is a strong word, but it is required, I am afraid. Paul Ramsey used another strong word to describe the situation in 1967, and I expect he would still use it today. That word is *heresy*. "The identification of Christian social ethics with specific partisan proposals that clearly are not the only ones that may be characterized as Christian and as morally acceptable comes close to the original and New Testament meaning of *heresy*," he wrote. "This, at least, was Paul's meaning when he condemned the factions (*hairesis*)" among the Christians in Corinth and in Rome.

In recent times, the Religious New Right has been much and justly criticized for suggesting that there is only one Christian position on a multitude of political issues. Ramsey noted then what is much more dramatically evident now, namely, the ways in which the religious left and right mirror each other in both substance and style. If it did not violate my proposed moratorium on the term, I would say that Ramsey's observations in this connection were prophetic. He understood that the victim of conventional practice

is not only the integrity of Christian social ethics but also Christian ecumenism.

The damage to ecumenism results from the illusion that it takes courage to address policy specifics, whereas the working out of principled directions is in the realm of safe generality. In fact, however, in the national and international church councils there is no price attached to railing against Reagan or condemning the oppressive and imperialist power of U.S.-based capitalism. To the contrary, in these exotic ecclesiastical circles it takes courage to challenge that established orthodoxy. North American and Western European participants say they are only being responsive to the voice of the Third World. But Ramsey saw then what is even more evident now, namely, that the established orthodoxy is overwhelmingly the creation of American and Western European actors and reflects much more the global dichotomy between East and West than the division between North and South. Indeed, what are called Third World concerns are largely crafted by First World functionaries, who also certify who is and who is not an "authentic voice" of those concerns. Again, it is an instance of elective affinity, which is the opposite of ecumenism. Giving up on the more difficult task of elevating moral discourse in public debate, church leaders settle into the partisanships of their choosing, and thus the ecumenical movement becomes ever more sectarian and divisive.

While one wants to be balanced and even-handed, it is not adequate to note that there are religious actors who are equally partisan and sectarian on the other end of the political spectrum. The symmetry does not hold. Those who claim to be ecumenical Christians have the primary obligation to be ecumenical. Jerry Falwell and his associates may not recognize us as brothers in Christ, but we acknowledge them as such, and with that acknowledgment comes a very heavy ecumenical responsibility.

In 1967 Ramsey noted the excitement about Christian-Marxist dialogue in Europe. Agreeing with Kenneth Boulding, who was also at the Geneva meeting, Ramsey observes, "The parallel to this for us [Americans] would be if steps were taken to open dialogue between the liberal church opinion represented in the NCC and the conservative evangelicals—the right wing." Then and now, the putatively ecumenical Christians claimed that the evangelicals and

others had "dropped out of the dialogue." In truth they were never included. The history of the National Council of Churches (NCC) is one of attempted consolidation of liberal, mainline Protestant hegemony in American life. To this extent it was and is anti-ecumenical in originating impulse and continuing practice.

Fifteen years later, the insurgency of evangelical and fundamentalist religion in the public arena has made Ramsey's plea even more urgent. In addition, the subsequent move from Christian-Marxist dialogue to Marxist Christianity and Christian Marxism, under the banner of sundry liberation theologies, has made a positive response to that plea still more difficult.

Two Models for Ecumenism

Ramsey saw then two alternative models that, if heeded, could restore ecumenism to the ecumenical movement. The first model was the Faith and Order work of the World Council of Churches (WCC). He pleaded that the social-action sectors of the WCC should emulate the theological and intellectual seriousness of Faith and Order. The plea can still stand today. Many of us continue to be committed to the WCC because of Faith and Order, which—as in its recent production of "Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry"—continues to keep alive the originating and unifying vision of the ecumenical movement. Sad to say, under the WCC's present leadership the role of Faith and Order has been diminished sharply, while resources and attention have gravitated toward the organs of divisive political partisanship.

The second model in which Ramsey saw reason for hope was the Roman Catholic Church, and most particularly the process and product of Vatican Council II. The council, he said, provided a model of genuine deliberation, in contrast to the predictable and promiscuous production of positions that marks the WCC and the NCC. In addition, the Vatican Council exercised a self-denying ordinance that respected the difference between moral directions and policy directives.

Today there is worry about whether Roman Catholic leadership in America is not imitating the pattern that has brought liberal Protestant social action into disrepute. The worry is not without foundation. Yet I believe that the process of consultation and

deliberation surrounding the current pastoral letter on nuclear arms, for example, is still far superior to that which produces most liberal Protestant statements. While the bishops might in the long run succumb to the overweening influence of a budding bureaucracy of presumed experts, they still have an understanding of their teaching (magisterial) authority that is lacking in Protestantism. More than that, God has raised up in John Paul II a man who has a powerful and exquisitely nuanced understanding of the church's distinctive role in political change. For these reasons I believe that Ramsey's hope is still justified today, the hope that the Roman Catholic model can recall to ecumenism the Protestant churches that call themselves ecumenical.

A Start at Self-Examination

As a result of the controversies of the past year or so, there are a few promising signs of self-examination in these churches. Not yet, unfortunately, among the leaders of the councils and their dominant member churches, but in publications such as the *Christian Century*, the *United Methodist Reporter*, and *Christianity and Crisis*. The self-examination to date is largely limited to structural questions, but these may be a start. As Ramsey also noted, the churches are practiced in issuing facile calls for government and socioeconomic systems to restructure themselves radically but have shown little inclination to criticize their own structures.

For the NCC, it may be too late. Martin Marty of the University of Chicago is a conscientiously mainline observer who has often implied that the Council may be a bureaucratic shadow of its originating purpose. The NCC began at a time when mainline confidence was high and it was assumed that the resources of the mainline could be channeled readily into causes promoting social change. Marty noted in an interview: "The NCC never caught on to what hit it, and so there is a cultural lag. Their responses today are reflexive and automatic. I almost never look with hope to their documents. . . . Their fundamental problem is that they live as if the spiritual and moral capital and power of the 1950s could be spent forever. They must begin to realize that you have only as much power as the current generation is investing" (*Chicago Tribune*, January 30, 1983).

Questions of structure and cultural change are important, but I conclude by returning to the contention that is largely implicit in Ramsey's analysis of 1967: the crisis is a crisis of faith. We can doubtless all agree on the need for a spiritual revival in American and world Christianity, but the idea of spiritual revival may seem somewhat amorphous. I mean more specifically a theological and ethical reconstruction based upon devotion to the radical distinctiveness of the church and its gospel of salvation. I mean the courage to believe that a self-denying ordinance in the political arena is required, not because the church's mission is less than, but because it is ever so much greater than, the partisanships to which some would make that mission captive. I mean the boldness to defy the idols—also the political idols—of secularism. But effective defiance must be emphatically ecumenical; it must more believably present the community of faith as a source and promise of the unity the world seeks; and therefore it must engage more intensively the largest single communion of believers, the Roman Catholic Church.

What then do I mean by spiritual, theological, and ethical renewal? I mean a call from the past that is, now more than ever, the challenge of the present and the promise of the future. I mean the appeal of Oxford in 1937 and the plea of Ramsey in 1967. I mean, "Let the church be the church!"

Responses

1. BISHOP EARL G. HUNT, JR.

I am grateful for Richard Neuhaus's stirring and closely reasoned presentation. And I have belonged for a decade and a half to the large company of Christians grateful to Paul Ramsey for *Who Speaks for the Church?* The American church has borne for thirty years the trappings of a spiritually arid activism, accomplished too often at the expense of theological breadth and depth, philosophical and psychological maturity, and authentic devotional reflection. This activism has become nearly monstrous—often incompletely informed, sometimes politically biased, and frequently without clear logic or dependable consistency.

Not inconsiderable energy, skills, and resources of the church, both as separate denominations and in ecumenical councils, have been consumed in this activism in spite of modest clerical and larger lay dissent. The emphasis has been upon *doing* instead of *being*, even though the core of Christian teaching has always insisted upon *being* as the essential parent of effective *doing*.

This emphasis has invoked concern and criticism of the American church, particularly on the part of British and continental Christians. We have produced a cacophony of loud, sometimes well-worded outcries, fashioned into resolutions often more political than religious, about nearly every human issue worthy of headlines.

More often than not the results have been distressingly poor: the church has lost depth, and the body politic has not been impressed! This era of activistic Christianity, devoid of what Neuhaus and Ramsey would call "principled reflection," has been paralleled almost precisely by an era of diminution of Christian influence in

numerous arenas of life. To put it another way: The controversial involvement of the church in a thousand and one social and political struggles around the globe has produced little change in the bottom-line report on the human malady. Its cost-effectiveness has been virtually nil.

The church's problem may be traceable to at least four thought movements, each of which, except the last, has fragmentary truth. These movements have infiltrated theology, social ethics, worship, and casual Christian table-talk in the past several decades. Without development, they are: *existentialism, situation ethics, liberation theology,* and, as a kind of bracket around them all, *a persistently low doctrine of the Bible.* The church today, save in its evangelical community, has little *eschatology* (doctrine of final things) honestly related to the Scriptures, and its *soteriology* (doctrine of salvation) reflects more functional humanism than the Bible's transcendental insistences.

A Pervasive Anti-Intellectualism

But to achieve again what Mr. Neuhaus basically proposes, a reconstruction of Christian faith, which from my viewpoint has to happen, will involve formidable difficulties. The permeating secularism of this technological age has spawned on the ordinary levels of life a largely unacknowledged but deadly anti-intellectualism. Liberal education with its difficult "why" questions is struggling for survival. Registration for history, literature, and philosophy courses in the average college is hard to assure. John Henry Newman's classic book *The Idea of a University* is an out-of-date tome even among liberal arts enthusiasts today. Recently I talked with a group of college students, some of them seniors, on the campus of a fully accredited four-year institution, and when I mentioned Dante and Pascal I discovered that no one there really knew who they were! To do the serious reflective thinking required to restore genuine theological substance to the church will demand stubborn resistance to the prevailing religious and intellectual moods of our day.

I believe in the church's constant and courageous involvement in the burning social problems of the 1980s—but on a platform of sound New Testament theology and with the clear understanding that the Gospel judges *all* political and economic systems.

I believe in the ecumenical movement with all my being, and I hold ecumenism to be, for the Christian, a precious treasure. I applaud the World Council and the National Council for the many praiseworthy ministries in which they are engaged. But I speak in tones of love as I say that I fear there is presently a malaise in them so complex and critical that the patients must surrender to extensive surgery if they are to survive. Thoughtful and loyal church members are asking, properly I think, for an objective study of all substantive allegations of recent months and a full report of the findings. It is my conviction that such a study should not be resisted but welcomed.

I believe in the gospel, as Mr. Neuhaus so eloquently proclaimed it in the heart of his paper. I believe with him that "our engagement in the provisional politics of the present must be informed by our commitment to the radically 'new politics' of the promised kingdom"—and that our Christian worship does, indeed, "engage the cosmos in the triumph of its Lord." The exciting privilege of prolepsis complements the duty of proclamation, for the believer holds within himself even now a strange and wonderful assurance of God's final triumph!

But I believe that the church today and the ecumenical movement as well must be realistic enough to set their own houses in order, or God and his people surely will raise up another church and another movement of Christian unity.

The King is dead. Long live the King!

2. PAUL RAMSEY

I want first to agree entirely with Richard Neuhaus's main criticism and correction of my little book. I did call for "less": less confusion of politics, fewer statements issuing from church counsels that do not have clear, definitive Christian warrant. In doing so, I did say that statesmen, and Christians as citizens (individually or in parties), have a *standing* responsibility for secular outcomes that the churches do not have. I may have magnified the responsibility of government and of citizenship and, by comparision, seemed to slight the church's faithfulness—and the "awe-full" alternative of

betrayal of the truth once delivered by identification with particular political causes or, what is worse, its trivialization by resolutions.

So first a word about the relation between ethics (which is reflection on the Christian moral life) and theology (which is reflection on the faith of the church) in the Catholic and Protestant traditions.

In the Catholic tradition, moral theology, having to do with life, was generally separated from theology, having to do with the faith. This was done because "morals" was so closely linked with the confessional and with morality common to all mankind. Even today there is some extrinsic interest in keeping the faith and the life separate, on the part of those who dissent from some of the moral teachings of the Catholic Church (and, I would say, from some of our common Christian moral teachings as well) and hope to do so without touching the faith of the church.

But in Protestantism, the faith and the life have been much more closely linked; to separate theology from ethics in seminary instruction or in Christian social action can have only disastrous consequences. This is my agreement with Neuhaus's correction. I hold that my work or anyone else's work as an ethicist must be theologically grounded.

Moreover, the faith of the church has been under massive assault in modern times. Hence Christian theology is in profound disarray. Edward Shils of the University of Chicago has written that virtually every member of the intelligentsia—and this includes rabbis, ministers, priests, journalists, professors, and the makers of books without end—is an "alienated" person, alienated from every tradition except the tradition that we need no tradition. The traditionless tradition of the Enlightenment has captured all our mentalities, and has deeply invaded the mind of the church. Every new, "relevant" theology and every church assemblage proves this to be so.

My theological statement would be this, which I think is the sum of classical Christian theology: If to any human understanding there has been given knowledge of God, it is God's knowledge of God. If to any human being there has been imparted by the Holy Spirit any love to God, it is God's love spread abroad in our hearts.

If to any creature joy and happiness in God, it is God's felicity participated in by the Christian.

Now, as a theological ethicist I believe that the church, in its understanding of discipleship, must prolong the meaning of what I just said into actual life as far as possible, as far as it will go, as far as faith sheds light upon our pathway—but not one step further, though the world fall! As individuals and parties doubtless we must go further, and act as "judges and dividers" over men (Luke 12:14) and their welfare, but without claiming for that the lordship of Christ. That summary of Christian faith is all the warrant we have for talking about the Christian life; it is the sole basis for any social message the church may have, any healing it seeks to bring to this bent and broken world.

It may be, as that great historian of Christian social teachings Ernst Troeltsch once said, that there will come a time when what is known as Christianity in no way resembles anything that bore the name in ages past. It may be that words attributed to a nineteenth-century Methodist will prove true: "Methodism and all her institutions will stand firm and strong long after Christianity has disappeared from the face of the earth!" But if so, it will be because of massive treason on the part of persons who should know better, who should know that to be Christian in any age is to be possessed by a tradition of faith and life not wholly, or even mainly, plastic to changing times.

An Opening to the Right

Next, I want whimsically to make a little opening to the evangelical and political "right," in hope of receiving the world's acclaim such as came to the good Pope John XXIII when he made his opening to the "left," or maybe as much as the "new left" who have seized journals of Christian opinion and too often the church's voice since the Geneva conference. I shall do this first by answering the question, "Can We [Christians] Ever Support Communism?" with a resounding "No." I affirm that "it would be better for [the Christian] to support no political movement and to work in indirect ways through the church for the development of the moral and spiritual conditions which in the future will be more favorable to an alternative than *to help Communism win power*." Those words

were written in an article in the *Christian Century*, June 11, 1952, by Professor John Bennett of Union Theological Seminary. At a sort of valedictory address at an annual meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics some years later, when asked by me whether that was still his view, Professor Bennett with a wave of the hand said he supposed he did say something like that, back in the Cold War days. Thus was a correct view of totalitarianism replaced by an erroneous view of state actions in the international system!

One more opening. There are some here present who do not recall that it was the *Christian Century* that advocated extreme separation of church and state, while *Christianity and Crisis* supported, for example, prayer in public schools. The founders of *C. & C.* were not in the business of announcing the end of the Constantinian era (loud cheers!), or at work destroying any last relic of Christianity's influence upon our culture and institutions. This can be seen by the editorial in which the journal changed its position on school prayer (vol. 23, 1964, pp. 110-11), and also by the extraordinary reason given for that change. Editor John Bennett expressed strong "reservations about certain trends within the churches . . . reflected in this discussion." He objected to hailing "the secularization of the common life as a good from the Christian standpoint." "We cannot assume," he wrote, "that the best policy for the nation is to establish inhibitions on religious expression in the context of public life" or that it is "a good thing to eliminate from public life all the symbols that can be interpreted to point to the transcendent" or that "the schools should . . . eradicate from their practices everything that reminds children of the transcendent." Still, because of "*the parade of those who support the amendment*" (my italics) the editorial reaffirmed opposition to efforts to amend the Constitution in order to modify the effects of the Supreme Court's decision!

E. Stanley Jones once said he had more in common with the most ignorant Indian Christian who went to the same Lord's table with him than with his close friend Gandhi. American liberal Christians, in sharp contrast, manifest by what they say and do more in common with civil libertarians, and with even more radical parties, than with evangelicals, with whom they have actually the highest cause in common.

John Bennett was the last of the best ecumenicists. He agreed, incidentally, with my view that the churches should strive to give moral *direction*, not *directives*, to the societies in which they dwell. Still he thought that ecumenical ethics should lean this way or that to be a "corrective"; and it was always clear which way. Forgetting the fullness of the truth is a strange way to be "the teaching church." Perhaps the illness afflicting the Church and Society sector of the ecumenical movement is the notion that in distributing his gifts (I Cor. 12:28) God gave some (namely, us) the gift of being "teachers" of the host of communicants who are not yet little liberals or Marxists.

To return to the main address in this session: I was as surprised as anyone to discover that Neuhaus's remarks were to be an extended comment on my 1967 tract. Perhaps under these circumstances I can claim a little extra time to say something about Dick Neuhaus—and me.

Testing for Justice

I think it is not quite true to say, as he did, that "we took opposite sides in the debate over U.S. policy in Indochina." I *tried*, at least, to impose upon *myself writing as a Christian ethicist* the same "self-denying ordinance" that I advocated for the churches. I wrote about how to determine the justice or injustice of conflicts, the tests to be used in discussing whether the Vietnam war was justified or not. My question was, *How* should the Vietnam war be justified?, not *Is* Vietnam a just war? (a title the editor of *Dialog*, Winter 1967, substituted for mine). I freely grant that in the fury and fog of the verbal wars I failed to keep my agenda for reasoning morally about insurgency and counterinsurgency warfare entirely distinct from my own conviction that we were in Vietnam honorably. And I grew too late wise to the fact that the war was disproportionate. But I did not set out to use Christian ethical analysis to sanctify the working of my own political prudence among the conclusions.

So Citizen Neuhaus and Citizen Ramsey took opposite sides in foreign policy debates during those years. Indeed, Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam, of which Neuhaus was a leader, might (absent rhetorical pretensions) be viewed as an

example of a party of people who from the *inspiration* of their faith (as Maritain said) act together in behalf of a particular cause without claiming or cultivating the semblance of speaking for church or synagogue.

It approaches heresy when denominational boards, or the NCC and WCC, do the same. That allows the world's fratricide to enter the sanctuary. It leads to the desperation of the violent who would take the Kingdom by force (Matt. 11:12). In the quarrels among church people today we see the fruit of the seed planted by such persons as the reviewer who wrote in 1967: "The issue for our time is not 'who speaks for the church,' but who acts in the name of Christ . . . . It is therefore essential that we assume the role of servant to the oppressed. In so doing, we may act ourselves out of existence, but . . . this is the very point at which the Lord of the church will welcome us home" (*Christian Advocate*, Nov. 16, 1967).

Where Dick Neuhaus and I really parted company was upon the publication of *In the Name of America*, a book that charged the highest military and political leaders of this nation with war crimes. That touched on how reasonably to debate the justice of war. Doubtless Neuhaus repented of that long ago; and, since I was always humbler than he about my particular political convictions, I too forgive him.

During the Vietnam period, the media reported draft-card burnings at Neuhaus's church in Brooklyn. *I* knew then that whenever a young man went off to the war, there was also a liturgical lifting up of that conscientious decision before God and a congregation of his people.

In a book he co-authored called *Movement and Revolution*, Neuhaus used the just war criteria in appraisal of the *responsible* revolutionary. Long before that, his former allies had replaced "injustice" with "systemic violence," a term whose chief benefit was to justify opposing violence by revolutionary violence without limiting oneself by the requirement that the means be just or even that there be a reasonable expectation of gaining a greater good.

Throughout those years it was not hard to discern the theological depth Neuhaus came from. I at least was not surprised when he wrote in 1977:

> Ramsey's argument holds up well ten years later. The argument is not contingent upon one's views with respect to the war in Vietnam. Rather, it drives to the heart of the meaning of ecumenism in search for the appropriate "word to the world" on questions of social justice. In the sixties, let it be admitted, many of us who opposed the war in Vietnam were more concerned with garnering support for our position than with the quality of moral discourse from which that support emerged. A passion for the "right" conclusions tended to eclipse concern for the process. In such a climate Ramsey's protest was easily brushed aside as the distracting pedantry of a malcontent [*Worldview*, June 1977, p. 17].

In a letter to the editor I responded:

> I am concerned for Richard Neuhaus's future happiness. My book accomplished nothing; nor—I predict—will his article. There is no stopping a runaway trolley car, or much hope of turning it around. Institutions seem to have to wear out. Indeed, Constantinian sectarianism in secular clothing seems to have invaded the seminaries. Better to take the word of voices from the trolley (but not their meaning) when they tell us that the Holy Spirit is at work elsewhere [*Worldview*, Sept. 1977].

A journal of Christian opinion, or a party of Christians organized as Clergy and Laymen Concerned or as the Institute on Religion and Democracy, can—no less than denominational or NCC and WCC bureaucracies and conferences—come to the belief that they are the teaching church, the prophetic church, the church within the church, the future church, the true church of Jesus Christ.

The peril of putting forth particular political judgments in Christ's name faces the U.S. Catholic bishops also. In the final draft of their painstaking statement on nuclear war, a clear distinction is made between what they say with the authority of the church's moral teaching and the particular prudential political judgments they make with no claim to such authority. But how will the bishops *prevent* the sanctification of those specifics now that they have issued them? And what are we to make of the rush of the Protestant churches to endorse the bishops' statement? Do they mean to endorse the just war criteria, and what is said *consistent with those criteria* about abortion, or only those prudential political conclusions? The latter only, I suspect. Am I the only one who considers

such a situation scandalous evidence that the churches' voice has been totally corrupted by a result-oriented society?

One last point. I ought to disavow any competence or inclination to be a judge or divider in the current acrimonious dispute between those favoring the Institute on Religion and Democracy and those favoring the NCC-WCC. I didn't see the "60 Minutes" TV program or read the *Reader's Digest* article on the NCC-WCC. But I do wish to propose a little test. It is this: If you were outraged over the unfairness of those media events, ask yourself, Would I have been equally outraged over similar treatment worked upon the Dow Chemical Company? Or if you think the defense that church monies went only for humanitarian relief and not to arm terrorists (if that *was* the defense) was a good one, ask yourself, Should *that* have removed the objection to the symbol and the substance of Michael Flannery, an avowed supporter of the radical wing of the IRA, being the grand marshal of New York's St. Patrick's Day parade this year? Or, on the matter of school prayer, if your heart goes out to little children who might be embarrassed by having to ask to be excused from the exercise, ask yourself, Does it equally pain me that children in the state of New Jersey will have to ask to be excused from required sex education in the schools, if they object to this on moral and religious grounds?

This is "swapping places," the better to make moral judgments or claims. It is the Golden Rule argument for telling right from wrong. Reason teaches us this. But its grounding in what Scripture teaches is that Christ swapped places with us while we were going on our way claiming that we were right anyway. That is the only healing word yet heard on earth.

3. BISHOP PHILIP R. COUSIN

I was relieved to read the last paragraph in the call to this conference: "The central purpose of the conference is to raise the level of understanding about the problems and opportunities of religious involvement in the world, not to arrive at a consensus." When I read that I breathed a sigh of relief.

The presentation by the Reverend Mr. Neuhaus was an outstanding review and critique of the work of Paul Ramsey. However, I found that I could not clearly discern who speaks for the church in his presentation. I would have appreciated hearing a definition of the church from Mr. Neuhaus. I found it rather difficult to follow some of his usages of the word *church*. He had a tendency to shift from the theological to the sociological without saying he was doing so or pointing out the differences.

The Two Church Functions

The church is both theological and sociological in its function. This distinction has been described best for me by Colin Williams and H. Richard Niebuhr. Williams, in his book entitled *The Church*, described the church as both a theological event and a sociological institution. He described it as a theological event in the following manner: "The church is a movement, a pilgrim people moving across time and space in participation in the mission of Jesus Christ. It is an event because this participation has to happen, and that happening is not something that is guaranteed in the institutional heritage."

The church as theological event is those persons who are called into activity by the spirit and power of God to do his will. They form the witnessing community that has been called, in traditional terms, the Body of Christ. The church as a theological event was further described by Williams as follows: ". . . the people of God, constantly being called to stretch out beyond the institutionally given, to the final purpose and plan of God. They are the people of God, in search of the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

H. Richard Niebuhr described the theological function of the church in his book entitled *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry* as follows: ". . . the human community directed toward the divine reality. Its uniqueness lies in its particular relation to that reality, a relation inseparable from Jesus Christ. It is related to God through Jesus Christ, first in the sense that Jesus Christ is the center of this community, directed toward God. The church takes its stand with Jesus Christ before God and knows him, though with many limitations, with the mind of Christ."

Niebuhr further asserted that the church needs to be defined by the use of the polar terms *community* and *institution*. Both he and Williams said that the church has a sociological nature, and they described this nature by using the term *institution*. The church, to be properly understood, must be defined sociologically as well as theologically. Niebuhr's position was that a social reality such as the church cannot be described by means of one of these categories only, and that much misconception of the church results from such exclusive use.

Niebuhr continued, "It seems clear that no community can exist without some institutions that give it form, boundaries, discipline, and the possibilities of expression and common action." Williams supported this position. The church must have institutional forms. It is called to bring the hidden meaning of life to visibility, and its Lord equips it with continuing forms that express both his care for it and his purpose for it. The church as a theological event community and as an institution must constantly examine itself and must constantly speak to the world. Not to do so would imply that there is no need for a prophetic voice to stir, motivate, and create the ethos that will help shape the direction, style, form, structure, organization, and visible practice of the institution as it becomes the witnessing community.

I am in agreement with the thesis of Mr. Neuhaus that the church must serve as a teacher to elevate thought and discourse, by which policy is formed, rather than as a voice to influence public policy specifics. But when he speaks of the church as being itself, does he mean a community of believers? A structured institution? Or both? If the church is to be the church, must it always transcend? When, if ever, does it become immanent in history, actively striving to bring the Kingdom of God into reality?

Mr. Neuhaus refers to the National Council of Churches' headquarters as housing the "social action curia," where Christian fellowship is often determined more by one's attitude toward Ronald Reagan than by one's faith in Jesus Christ. To me this is a rather invidious comparison. If the attitude, actions, and public posture of Ronald Reagan or any other person are threatening to the purposes of a derelict Semite preacher who is the human

manifestation of the will of God, then those who oppose the same should not be labeled as a fellowship without a legitimate Christian faith.

It is very disturbing when people choose their church by their choice of politics. But it is equally disturbing when theologians allow their theology and their ethics to be structured by their political leanings and use these leanings to establish the norms for the church. I would like to ask Mr. Neuhaus if faith and order supersede social action, justice, and liberation.

Abolishing Evil, Building the Kingdom

Ordinances, resolutions, pastoral letters—they all tend to be sounding brass and tinkling cymbals if they do not initiate, support, and sustain action that leads to the abolition of evil and the establishment of God's kingdom. If the voice of the Pope is as powerful and exquisitely nuanced to understand the church's distinctive role in political change as Mr. Neuhaus suggests, then one could assume that the Roman Catholic-dominated countries, upon hearing papal prounouncements on human justice, freedom, and liberation, will show the most marked change toward building the kingdom of God.

I am of the opinion that Mr. Neuhaus's comparison of the ecclesiastical authority of Roman Catholic spokesmen and mainline Protestant spokesmen is not justly done. How can you rightly compare papal pronouncements with those made by the presidents of the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches?

Mr. Neuhaus concludes with the ambiguous statement that is the title of his presentation: "Let the church be the church!" Again I ask, Which church? And would it always be transcendent? Who speaks for the community of believers who are reaching beyond the institutionally given and are seeking to make the kingdom of God a reality here on earth?

If you are in that number, then you must speak, lest the very stones cry out.

REPLY BY RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

Let me respond briefly to several points. Bishop Hunt's eloquent emphasis upon the anti-intellectual character of this current cultural dominance is very important to underscore. How extraordinary it is that the prestige media of our time, and those who are the true believers in the hegemony of the secular Enlightenment, are able to portray the challenge to the Enlightenment as being raised by anti-intellectual yahoo rednecks and the like, when in fact the challenge, as articulated for example by Bishop Hunt, is precisely in the name of the grandeur and the complexity and the nuances of the Western intellectual tradition!

I think our agreements and disagreements this morning were within the bounds suggested by Albert Outler, the great Methodist theologian at Perkins School of Theology, at a recent meeting in Dallas. Asked to give the invocation, Dr. Outler prayed: "Keep us, O Lord, from the loveless truth that wounds and the mindless love that deceives." Isn't that extraordinary? "The loveless truth that wounds and the mindless love that deceives." I'm sure that all our exchange this morning is within the bounds of that prayer.

And yet there are some serious disagreements, as Bishop Cousin made clear. He spoke of the different definitions of the church, theological, sociological, political, and so on. The church can be described in many different ways. There are many different models—*Models of the Church,* to use the title of a book by another participant in this conference, Avery Dulles. But I would say to you that the church, that historical entity which we call the Christian Church, is of very little interest unless at the beginning and at the end and all along the way the *theological* definition is primary.

To say that is not in any way to be anti-institutional. The word *institution* is simply a synonym for social perdurance, as far as I can see. Nothing endures unless defined in some institutional form. But it is the originating definition of reality, the theological definition,

the truth claims, if you will, that are constitutive of that institutional existence. And it is that set of truth claims, or at least confidence in asserting them, that is so dismally, so tragically lost in our Christian life today.

Paul Ramsey reminded us that whatever love there is for God is God's love, whatever knowledge of God is God's knowledge. And then he said, we must go all the way that this truth will carry us—but no further—though the world fall. *Though the world fall.* This, it seems to me, shows precisely where we've lost our nerve: we've lost our courage to say that.

Take the opposite of that statement. Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth,* a wonderful book in some ways, is the most thoroughly pagan—in the precise sense of the word—statement one could imagine of this overriding problem of nuclear threat and what it means. Schell begins with the premise that there has never been and never will be anything beyond this world. Therefore you dare not say "though the world fall."

We Christians don't believe that. Yet our belief that this world is not the whole of reality does not diminish our sense of concern; it rather underscores and impassions and empowers our sense of responsibility for this world, for which we are held accountable as stewards to God.

But I'd have to challenge Bishop Cousin's statement that theological constructs are valid only if they lead to action that effectively reduces evil or increases good. I put to you that most of the evils we encounter in this world, beginning with the great evil that is death, are not amenable to human remedy; that effectiveness—effectiveness in bringing about a change from evil to good—cannot be the test; that a utilitarian test cannot be applied to the truth claims of the Christian faith. We have no promise that we will be *effective;* we have only the imperative to be *faithful.*

Now, that's terribly important to underscore. Paul Ramsey suggested that the test was love. The test is not effectiveness. Without love there is only sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.

I am opposed to the partisan church. I'm all for what is called the "preferential option for the poor" and the ways in which that can be properly understood. But the whole notion of the partisan church is, I think, demonic. The church is the totality of the

baptized community of faith confessing Jesus Christ as God and Saviour. Wherever people gather to make that confession, that is the church.

And this church is, by definition, not partisan. It is wrong when liberation theologians try to identify the church with a movement, a proletarian revolution. It is also wrong when some fundamentalist theologians try to identify it with a particular doctrinal system. *Christianity Today*, a wonderful magazine, did not publish its best article when a couple years ago it published one on Christianity in New York City. (I feel personally about this, being a New Yorker.) According to this article, there were *two* Christian churches in New York! That was it. And they were, of course, both fundamentalist or pretty far-right evangelical churches. That's partisan churchmanship of a different sort, of a doctrinal rather than a political variety. That too, must be opposed.

Imagine that in a given country there is civil war, and two Christian brothers are involved in it, one as a guerrilla fighter and the other as a general in the junta. They meet together in full recognition of each other as brothers in Christ. They kneel at the altar of the Lord and receive what they both acknowledge to be the transcendent definition of reality, namely, their incorporation, under the lordship of Christ, into his one body, the church. They stand up and try to persuade each other of how Christians ought to be acting in this situation. They do not succeed. They forgive each other, and each leaves that altar and that church to go out to do what he perceives his responsibility to be as best he can understand it, God's will for him—namely, to kill his brother. That's the test of whether we're really serious when we say that the transcendent bond we have by baptism into the crucified and risen Lord is absolute.

4. **The United States in Opposition: Anti-Americanism in the United Nations**
   Daniel Patrick Moynihan
   Recognizing the combination of Marxist ideology and anti-Americanism in the Third World, the senator urges the United States to proclaim the achievements of democratic government.
5. **Patterns of Black Excellence,** *Thomas Sowell*
   A study of eight black schools demonstrates that educational excellence among blacks can be achieved in a "law and order," rather than an experimental, setting.
6. **Why Arms Control Has Failed,** *Edward N. Luttwak*
   Arms control can enhance national security at a lower cost and risk, but it has been misunderstood and misused by the United States with potentially disastrous results.
7. **Environmentalism and the Leisure Class,** *William Tucker*
   This dramatic case study illustrates how the "leisure class, marching under the banner of environmentalism," has prevented the development of much needed energy.
8. **A Search for Sanity in Antitrust,** *Walter Guzzardi, Jr.*
   Recent antitrust laws and Supreme Court decisions have undercut the purpose of the 1890 Sherman Antitrust Act, which was to encourage competition.
9. **Ethics and the New Class,** *Peter L. Berger*
   The New Class, which derives its livelihood from the production of knowledge, symbols, and ideas, is in a power struggle with the business community and the capitalist system.
10. **Will Lawyering Strangle Capitalism?,** *Laurence H. Silberman*
    The rapid growth of the legal process has reduced the scope for change by political and private means, threatening the vitality of capitalism and democracy.
11. **Is Capital Punishment Just?,** *Ernest van den Haag*
    The author concludes that it deters violent crime, affirms democratic social values, and is just.
12. **The Case for Doing Business in South Africa,** *Herman Nickel*
    Most economic and racial group leaders in South Africa insist that reduced U.S. investment would cause unemployment and slow movement toward racial justice.
13. **Regulation and the New Class,** *Paul H. Weaver*
    An influential element of the upper-middle class places its confidence in government regulation and profoundly distrusts private enterprise.
14. **Trendier Than Thou: The Episcopal Church and the Secular World,** *Paul Seabury*
    A critique of recent efforts to make the church relevant to current social problems.
15. **The Press and American Politics,** *J. William Fulbright, Raymond Price, and Irving Kristol*
    A politician, a President's speechwriter, and a social philosopher find that the American press is often arrogant and its political reporting is frequently slanted.
16. **Is the New Morality Destroying America?,** *Clare Boothe Luce*
    There can be no public virtue without private morality based on universal principles.
17. **Politicizing Christianity: Focus on South Africa,** *Edward Norman*
    A critique of "liberation theology," which identifies the Christian mission with revolutionary and sometimes terrorist causes.
18. **Alienation and U.S. Foreign Policy,** *Paul Craig Roberts*
    Excessive self-criticism in America and a sense of guilt about our shortcomings erode our capacity to respond effectively to the Soviet military and ideological challenge.
19. **The Cost of America's Retreat,** *Ben J. Wattenberg*
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    Fred Charles Iklé, with a response by Radomir Bogdanov and Lev Semeiko
    A former top SALT negotiator says American weakness, bordering on inferiority, encourages Soviet expansion. Two Soviet officials dispute his claims.

22. Dictatorships and Double Standards: A Critique of U.S. Policy
Jeane Kirkpatrick
A carefully documented indictment of the Carter administration's selective indignation toward allied and friendly Third World regimes.

23. Taiwan: Pawn or Pivot?, *Parris H. Chang, Gerald McBeath, and Ralph N. Clough*
Two professors and a former diplomat analyze Taiwan's past, present, and future prospects.

24. Crusade Against the Corporation: Church Militants on the March, *Herman Nickel*
Church activists, working through the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, are leading a campaign to curb the power of multinational corporations. A major objective is to control the sale of infant formula in the Third World; their major tactic is to boycott Nestlé products.

25. America the Enemy: Profile of a Revolutionary Think Tank, *Rael Jean Isaac*
A thorough examination of the Institute for Policy Studies suggests that it is the hub of a revolutionary political network masquerading as an authentic "think tank."

26. Washington vs. the Public Schools, *J. Myron Atkin*
Examines the increasing penetration of elementary and secondary education by the federal government to achieve social goals or to advance the interests of politically powerful minorities.

27. Washington vs. the Universities, *Daniel Patrick Moynihan*
The senator asserts that the government has the power "to shut down any university" in America by withholding funds if it fails to comply with regulations tied to federal grants.

28. Christian Schools, Racial Quotas, and the IRS, *Peter Skerry*
The author concludes that the recent Christian-school movement is a reaction to "creeping humanism" and moral relativism in the public schools, not to racial problems.

29. Solzhenitsyn and American Democracy, *George F. Will and Michael Novak*
Two respected political commentators admire Solzhenitsyn's insistence that an enduring society must have deep spiritual roots but find he expects too much from democracy.

30. Religious Freedom and the Supreme Court, *Dallin H. Oaks*
A law professor says that in applying the First Amendment the Supreme Court tends to define religion broadly in relation to the "free exercise" provision and narrowly for "non-establishment."

31. Sanctifying Revolution: Mainline Churchmen Turn Radical
Rael Jean Isaac and Erich Isaac
In pursuing justice and "liberation," mainline church leaders have increasingly supported revolutionary, sometimes even violent, means.

32. Education, Character, and American Schools, *Gerald Grant*
Students must once again be taught to respect a common code of behavior even if it is a "provisional morality" that they may later revise.

33. The New Defenders of Capitalism, *Norman Podhoretz*
The traditional hostility of intellectuals toward market enterprise shows signs of reversal; many now argue that capitalism is the most productive system and increases freedom of choice.

34. Moral Implications of Energy
William G. Pollard, Frederick S. Carney, and Thomas J. Reese, S.J.
A nuclear physicist (and Episcopal priest), a professor of Christian ethics, and an editor of *America* reflect on the moral and theological implications of nuclear energy.

35. How to Lose a War: The Press and Viet Nam, *Robert Elegant*
A veteran Asia correspondent says the Viet Nam war was lost not on the battlefield but in the minds of Western liberals whose views dominated the prestige press in the United States.

36. Why Latin America Is Poor, *Michael Novak*
Latin American poverty is caused not by North American wealth or multinational corporations but by domestic social and cultural forces rooted in the political and economic institutions and world view of the Spanish conquerors.

37. On the Brink: The Myth of German Anti-Americanism, *Uwe Siemon-Netto*
The German left wing's "long march" through the courts, schools, churches, media, and other institutions has had considerable success, but the great majority of the German people do not support the radical demand for the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

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(continued)

38. The Media Elite and American Values, *S. Robert Lichter and Stanley Rothman*
From interviews with 240 journalists and broadcasters the authors conclude that the views of the media elite on major social, economic, and political questions are substantially to the left of those of middle America.

39. Risk and Nuclear Power: Scientists, Journalists, and the Public
S. Robert Lichter and Stanley Rothman
A careful survey of nuclear specialists and other scientists shows that those who know most about nuclear power are its strongest supporters.

40. Nuclear Weapons and the Peace Movement, *Henry A. Kissinger*
Combining a firm grasp of political realities with the wisdom of experience, the former secretary of state examines all major facets of the nuclear arms debate.

41. Private Virtues, Public Vices, *Jeane J. Kirkpatrick*
The U.S. representative to the United Nations distinguishes between private and public morality and argues that compromise and consensus-building are essential and desirable in the American political system.

42. Constitutional Democracy vs. Utopian Democracy, *Raymond English*
Constitutional democracy, based on a realistic view of human nature and on moral discipline, endures; utopian democracy, based on sentimental illusions, is ephemeral and often leads to tyranny.

43. Crime and American Culture, *James Q. Wilson*
In tracing the relations between crime and civic virtue in America over the past century, a distinguished Harvard professor affirms that the family, church, and school can play a significant role in reducing criminal behavior.

44. Moscow and the European Peace Movement, *J. A. Emerson Vermaat*
The peace movements of several Western European nations draw significant support from Moscow. Their activities have the effect of weakening Western military commitment relative to that of the Soviet Union, thus making nuclear war more likely.

45. Revolution, Terrorism, and U.S. Policy, *Ernest W. Lefever*
Terrorism, increasingly used by leftist revolutionaries who seek power by the bullet rather than by the ballot, is a serious threat to democratic government and to the U.S. interest in stability and peaceful development.

46. Reducing Risk by Restoring Strength: Reflections on Nuclear War
W. Scott Thompson
The risk of nuclear war decreases when U.S. and Soviet forces are approximately equal and when we have confidence in the quality of our deterrent, says the author. He deals also with the morality of self-defense, the myth of overkill, and the pacifist temptation.

47. Global Paternalism: The U.N. and the New International Class Struggle
Jeane J. Kirkpatrick
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Seymour Siegel, Marshall J. Breger, Joshua O. Haberman, and David Saperstein
Rabbi Siegel asserts that political liberalism, prevalent in the Jewish community, is true neither to Jewish interests nor to Jewish teachings; he sees signs of a turn toward conservatism. Responses to his theses are offered by a law professor, a leading Reform rabbi, and a religious activist.

49. Advancing Democratic Principles: A European Examines an Underused American Asset, *Stephen Haseler*
To compete successfully with adversaries of the West in the battle of ideas, Americans should build more effectively on the near universal recognition that the United States is democratic, free, and dynamic, while the Soviet Union is "repressive, bureaucratic, and boring."

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Ethnic Groups in History Textbooks
by Nathan Glazer and Reed Ueda *1983* *80 pages* *$4*
From a study of six current high school texts in American history, the authors conclude that the textbook writers, in attempting to foster respect for ethnic groups, tend to overemphasize victimization of minorities—particularly blacks, American Indians, Hispanics, and Asians—and the guilt of the majority, thus distorting the image of American society as a whole.

The Apocalyptic Premise: Nuclear Arms Debated
edited by Ernest W. Lefever and E. Stephen Hunt
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The Pope's 1979 Puebla (Mexico) speech rebuking "revolutionary" priests, and other supporting papal addresses; a definitive essay by "liberation theologian" Gustavo Gutierrez; and critical examinations of the Puebla message and of liberation theology by Michael Novak, Dale Vree, and James V. Schall, S.J.

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